



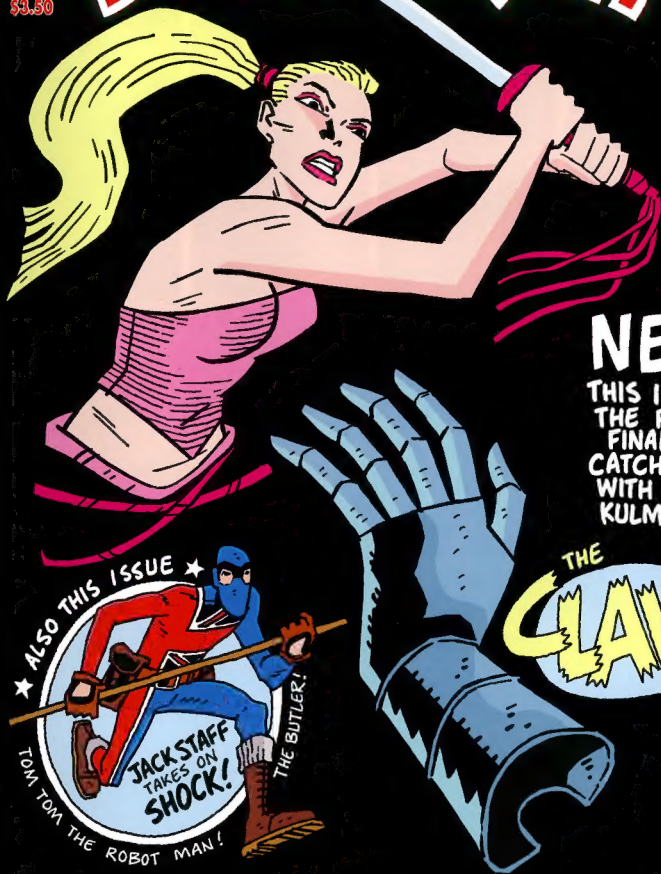
18

\$3.50

BRITAIN'S
GREATEST
HERO?

A
PAUL GRIST
COMIC?

Jack Staff



NEW

THIS ISSUE!
THE PAST
FINALLY
CATCHES UP
WITH BEN
KULMER!

THE
CLAW

★ ALSO THIS ISSUE ★



TOM TOM THE ROBOT MAN!





Jack Staff



PAUL GRIST
WRITER/ARTIST

ericstephenson
COLOURS



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The Bristol Comic Festival was good fun, sold lots of books, met lots of people, drew lots of pictures. If you went, hope you enjoyed it too. The ones I felt for were the Storm Troopers wandering round being very good humoured, despite the fact they must have been melting in those uniforms!

FLAG WAVING

There was one moment when I realised it was getting to me as I stood doing a drawing of Becky Burdock and was about to put a Burglar Bill mask on her ...

And that was only lunchtime on the Saturday...



Mind you, it kind of works don't you think? Vampire Reporters - could be the next big thing!

ORIGINAL ART FOR SALE

Single pages of the original art for Jack Staff are available at £55 UK \$110 US each. Prices include postage. Contact me by e-mail if you want to check the availability of a page and/or reserve it. Cheques payable to Paul Grist

e-mail : paulgrist1960@hotmail.co.uk

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ENGLAND

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PRINTED IN CANADA

Police cars heading
down the street.

Must be something
big going off.

Still, one man's
problem is another
man's distraction.

You can call me BEN
KULMER. I work for
Q - you probably won't
have heard of them.

Investigating the
unexplainable, the
Question Mark Crimes.

That's the day job.
Evenings, I'm more
what you might
call freelance ...

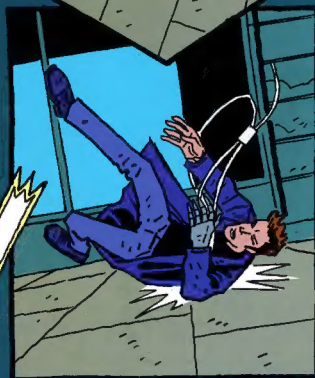
SCHING

No! It can't be her.

Not here.

NO...





THE
CLAW



ouch!

on your feet
Kulmer!



ouch!

Move it.

c'mon, she's
FAST.

Be FASTER!



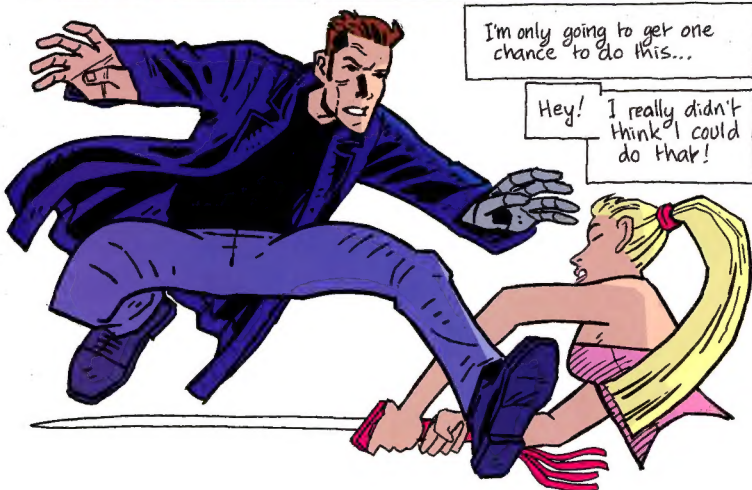
Damn,
she's
fast.



okay...

Watch her eyes...

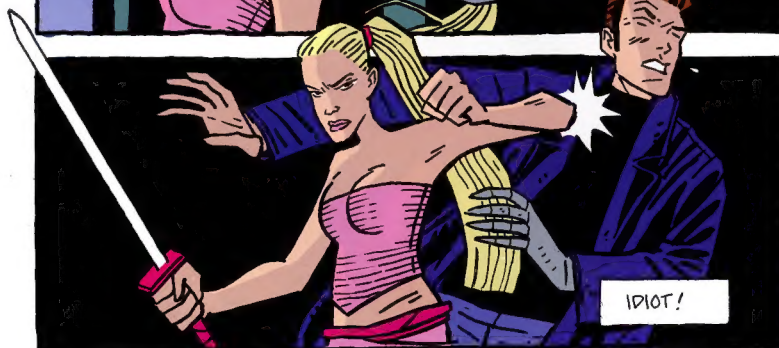
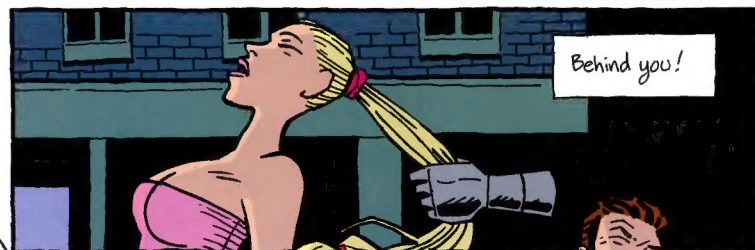
focus...



I'm only going to get one
chance to do this...

Hey!

I really didn't
think I could
do that!



I could
have just
RUN AWAY
...

But no, I
had to be
CLEVER.

I'm acting like a
rank amateur.

What is WRONG with me?

I never used to be this STUPID.

Is it just me...

or are those
lights getting
BRIGHTER?





Okay - I'm not too sure what happened there...



and I'm not that bothered either.



This is me getting out of here.



More Police. Some one's in trouble tonight.

WHEEE000

Yeah...

Like I'm not.



If Pink's here...

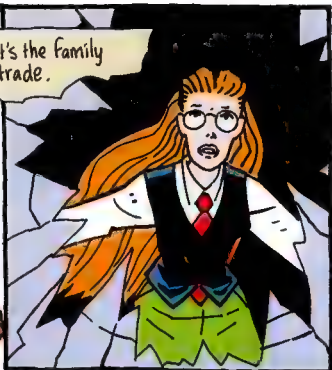
That means MASON'S onto me...*



CONTINUED!

My name is Harold Bramble.
I'm a Vampire Hunter.

It's the Family
trade.



My father taught
me everything
I know.

BRAMBLE & SON

VAMPIRE HUNTERS

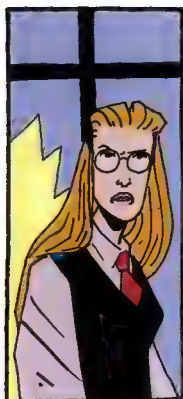
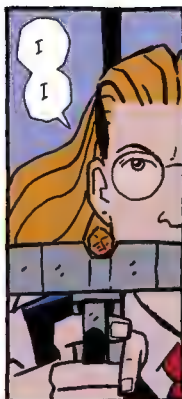


I know
about hate.

I know
about
killing.

And I know
this ...







CONTINUED!

THE STORY SO FAR ...



**BRITAIN'S
GREATEST
HERO!**

Jack Staff

ON THE RUN FROM THE
POLICE ACCUSED OF
ARMED ROBBERY
OUR STICK WIELDING
HERO IS CONFRONTED
BY **TOM TOM**
THE ROBOT MAN!



MASTER OF ELECTRICITY!

SHOCK

BUT CASTLETOWN'S
CAST IRON CHAMPION IS
QUICKLY FELLED BY THE
SELF PROCLAIMED
MASTER OF ELECTRICITY
WHO DRAINS ALL THE
POWER FROM THE
METAL GIANT'S BODY!

THE ELECTRICAL IMP
QUICKLY CASTS ASIDE
BRITAIN'S GREATEST
HERO AND IS SET TO
WREAK HAVOC UPON
THE CITY STREETS!



THE Butler

THEN INTO THE FRAY
STEPS THIS MYSTERIOUS
CHARACTER. ARMED
ONLY WITH A BOTTLE OF
MINERAL WATER AND A
SERVING TRAY HE
QUICKLY DEFLECTS THE
ATTENTION OF SHOCK
AWAY FROM THOUGHTS OF
WANTON DESTRUCTION,
GIVING JACK STAFF A FEW
VITAL MOMENTS TO
RECHARGE THE ROBOT
DETECTIVE!

NOW READ ON ...

CHAPTER

3

WHICH IS ALL
ABOUT ENERGY



AND MOVING
IT AROUND.





USING HIS **WOODEN STAFF** AS A **CONDUIT**, OUR PLUCKY PATRIOTIC CHARACTER, **JACK STAFF** SLOWLY ATTEMPTS TO DRAW THE EXCESS ELECTRICAL CHARGE OUT OF **SHOCK**, THE BLUE SKINNED MISHCHIEF MAKER.

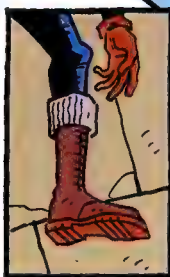
BUT

THE QUESTION YOU HAVE TO ASK IS:
"ONCE YOU'VE TAKEN THE ENERGY **OUT**
... WHERE DO YOU **PUT IT?**"





WELL, THAT'S
CERTAINLY
ONE WAY OF
GETTING RID
OF IT.



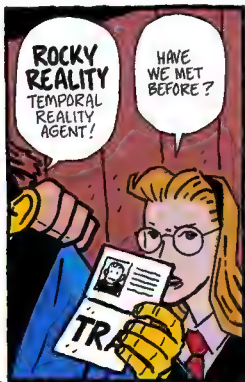
WELL, MOST OF
IT ANYWAY...

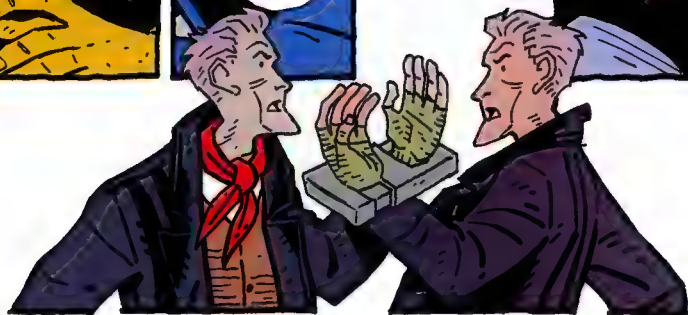






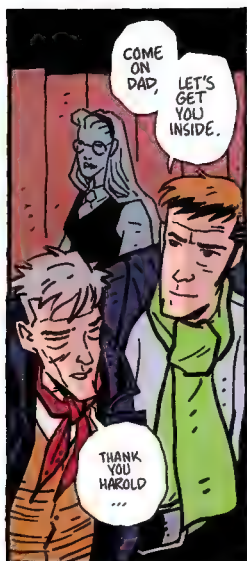
END CHAPTER THREE!







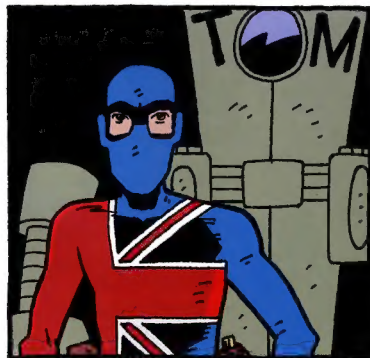






DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MAVERYK







THANKS
FOR THE
LOAN OF
THE
BOOK
...

THAT'S
OKAY
BECKY.



HOPE IT'S
HELPFUL..
G'NIGHT.

BYE
HAROLD.



BECKY BURDOCK STEPS
INTO THE NIGHT, BARELY
NOTICING THAT THE SHADOWS
SEEM A LITTLE DARKER.



WHILST ALBERT BRAMBLE
DREAMS OF THE HUNT.

THE THRILL OF THE CHASE.

AND THE BLOOD.

WARM JUICY BLOOD.

STAFF POST

P.O. Box 104, Highbridge TA9 4WD, England.
e-mail: paulgrist1960@hotmail.co.uk

Not much in the way of letters of comment or lale so I thought I'd try the old 'cutting and pasting posts from the message board' trick. It's what we call in the trade 'Doing a Benda!'. If you want to join in, remember, all this and more can be found on the Jack Staff message board at www.imagcomics.com.

Let's start with some queries about some Grant Morrison/Paul Grist obscurities from way back when:

Hi everyone

First off, congratulations to Paul on Jack Staff's new timely schedule. I feel spoiled to be getting a comic this good every month. Been a fan since *Genetel Tales* and your stuff just keeps getting better and better. Just re-read *Everything Under To Be In Black + White* for about the 40th time; good times.

Now, to the meat... Grant Morrison's long-since ossified website has a listing in the bibliography for this curio:-

Letterbox - Juliet 4 Romeo 2pps. The Royal Mail, 1991, art by Paul Grist.

As you can imagine, my google-fu skills aren't up to the task of finding info on a mag called Letterbox published by the Royal Mail. Needle anyone? Haystack?

So I was wondering if anyone here (yes Paul, I'm thinking of you) has any info on it, what it was, how it came about, where I can get a copy (yes, I am this obsessed with Grant Morrison) etc. The damn thing so obscure even that German guy's *Paul Grist* site hasn't got it listed!

Here's hoping...

De transmissions

Ah, Letterbox. This was a book put together by the Royal Mail (UK post delivery service) in 1990 (I think) as part of a letter writing competition for school children. The idea was to encourage letter writing (well this was 1990, back when people still wrote letters), and all the children who entered the competition received the Letterbox book, which was this rather lavishly produced ring bound book which covered all different aspects/ideas about letters.

Grant and I got the task of love letters in the style of Romeo and Juliet. And he's an interesting fact for all you trivia fans out there: They'd originally asked Will Eisner but he'd turned them down!

It was a single page comic strip - which was coloured and lettered by me.

I seriously doubt you'll be able to find a copy, but good luck!

Hey all

Pleasantries out the way first. Just read the 'read yourself RAW' page on Paul and there's props on there from Alex Todd. Wow... that's some serious praise!

Someone on Comics Should Be Good said a while ago that you don't realize how good Paul's art is until you try to copy it or draw in a similar style. So true; deceptively simple doesn't come close. Man you've got a fine sense of proportion/perpective etc. etc.

So anyway, another request for info. This time in the form of a unpublished project named *Forever England*, and that he'd included in *John Smith* (which I've read, written by Grant Morrison and drawn by... Paul Grist! Got anything on this one Paul? Story? Did it get to script or just pitch? Art samples? The whole finished but unpublished story?! Anything at all).

Thanks!

De-transmissions

PS - Regarding my last post, the Royal Mail Archive, custodians of the Royal Mail's history (including publications) has no record or archive of the Letterbox book. That's some shady custodianship!

Forever England is one of those great lost stories which would probably disappoint if it was ever found....

It was originally planned to go in *Trident*, a black and white anthology title published by Trident Comics. Grant and I had both agreed to do this when Fleetway announced that they were going to publish *Revolver* - which was a much better showcase for the story so we jumped ship.

Since we felt we had to do something for Trident, Grant strong together some old entries from his diaries and wrote *St. Swithia's Day*, which we saved our true masterpiece for *Revolver*.

The idea was a satirical romp of Britain in the nineties, following the travels of a struggling rock group across the UK. Lots of wacky hi-jinks involving the Royal Family, that sort of thing. I had a copy of Grant's original outline, but never got as far as drawing anything towards it. I think Grant wrote the script for the first episode declaring it was the best thing he'd ever written, only to have his word processor promptly eat it.

And that was it. *Revolver* got cancelled, and the Royal Family spent the nineties getting up to more wacky hi-jinks than we could have ever imagined.

And here's a few questions/speculations regarding the origin of Britain's Greatest Hero:

Will we ever see the origin of Jack Staff? Not John Smith, mind you. Rather the origin of the why and how John Smith (if that is his real name) decided to start wearing a costume with the Union Jack on it and become a superhero.

I think it would make for an interesting part of a story. It could be done without giving too much away about John's true origins.

El Hombre

I wanna know how he stays the same age. I know he has the ability to move energy around but does he sap peoples life force or something?

BuzzBous

I don't think he does this. I mean, he seems to be able to do something like it with people (see hurricane), but I think that's rather the exception. Jack feels like a distinctly positive one, and the idea of him feeding off other people seems wrong.

What'd want to know is, how old is he anyway? Did he tell Becky the truth or was he joking? How did he get his powers? How did he get involved with the green man in the first place, and what does he know about this mysterious war?

... and does Paul have this all figured out?

Nellode

I bet Jack's just generally immortal. Though I'm sure in plays into the whole Appearance/Disappearance act he plays, and how everyone forgets him when he's gone.

The Adventurer

Immortal... or just a very, very long life-span? At least he doesn't seem to age noticeably, maybe this is connected to his 'moving energy' power after all!

I wonder: what classic 'superhero origin' will it be? born this way? alien? scientific experiment gone wrong? or something mystical along the lines of Helen Morgan's 'valiant stone'?

Which reminds me... when the backstory of the valiant stone was told, we saw the silhouette of a man wearing the original stone. It looked like it could have been Jack - but it could be pure coincidence...

Nellode

Personally I'm not in any hurry to see Jack Staff's origin. He's interesting enough, and so are his

supporting cast, without his background needing to be explained, but when it does come around (issue #50?) then I'm sure it will be awesome

When it comes to Jack's origin, I think it's tied in with a classic legend of ancient Britain (well it's French actually, but most Brits don't realise it)...

Graham Pearce

What? King Arthur?

The Adventurer

Yeah, it's a bit obvious but I there are a few things that link them (but I won't go into them in here in case I'm 100% correct and ruin the entire series for everyone)

Graham Pearce

Going back to this quick, I just reread *The Weird World of Jack Staff*, and at the end there's a blurb saying the *Valiant Stone* leading on Earth in 1902. John Smith claims to have seen Charlie Raven live in the late 1890s. So I'm pretty sure that rules out Jack being the guy who found the Stone originally.

However, my reread of the Jack Staff series made me wonder if Mr. Green might be connected too. Because Helen Morgan's main mission seems to be acquiring all the missing shards of the *Valiant Stone* for Green.

Another thing about Mr. Green that caught my attention, in (Color series) issue #9 take a look at Mr. Green during the Helen Morgan dream sequence. Then flip to the last story page. See how Lord Gilbert Pearce is wearing his beggar cloak? The same way Mr. Green does! Connection perhaps?

The Adventurer

Paul, why did you decide to change the Jack Staff logo? (And there's no criticism implied there; I'm just wondering what the thinking was behind the change!)

Kelvin Green

I just thought after 25 issues I'd try something a little bit different. Visually, the new logo is a bit more subtle than the original 'nineteen sixties marvel title logo' - which basically had to be the same colour each time. The new logo can be used in different colours or even as a white outline form if required.

It's always a little risky changing logos - I do tend to regard a lot of the marvel comics logos of the 60's to be 'classic'. *Spider-Man* and the *Fantastic Four* are two examples of logos that have never been improved on in over 45 years.

The new Jack Staff works for me and no one's said anything about it one way or the other before now, so I was assuming people had just forgotten what the original looked like!

I'll be honest, I didn't even notice the logo change, apparently it changed with the Jack Staff Special. During a side-by-side comparison got to say both logos are about equal in my eyes. Both are bouncy and fun. So... thumbs up for the new logo if it works better for you Paul.

The Adventurer

Me too. I only noticed it with #15, although once I did, I realised that it had been different for a while. I like it. I like the solid blockiness of the original logo, but this one's a bit more playful.

Am I being a bit too pretentious?

Kelvin Green

I've resigned myself to the fact I'm never going to have the largest readership, but I've always considered myself with the thought 'I've got the quality end' - the smart ones, the appreciative, raffish, observant reader, those who understand the subtle nuance of storytelling...

I'm just fooling myself aren't I.

Here's a few quick answers to the question 'How can Jack change into his costume so fast?' as asked by Oajm Oen:

There's an awful lot that we still don't know about Jack and his powers. Perhaps his quick costume changes are part of that. Kelvin Green

Velcro fasteners. Paul Grist

Unstable molecules!!! Mw6f171

Massaig! Emb021

It seems to me that there is a real strong tradition of superheroes changing their costumes quickly and Jack is the inheritor of that tradition. Green Lantern got his ring to change his outfit for him! The other night I was reading an old *Detective Comics* from the 1970s where *Batgirl* changed from Barbara Gordon to her work duds whilst chasing the villain. Now there's a talent you'd pay to see Darren

And here's a few comments on issue 14:

Thanks, Paul - issue 14 offers us another great story, more of your own excellent and unique artistry, and... well... more things to wonder about. The identity of Mr. Punch's professor, for example... the reasons behind the pursuit of Alfred Chinard... and Lynda Jones suddenly showing herself to be a little more subtle and intelligent than we might've guessed from her previous appearance.

She seemed to be able to reveal something -- "You're not the only actor on the stage" -- and it will be fun to find out more. I had a thought that if Lynda tied her hair back, she could perhaps pass for Mr. Mason's sword-wielding commander, but there is probably more than one midriff-baring blonde in *Cautelwood*. Still, perhaps they shop at the same boutique?

The biggest question is what is Becky going to do when she finds out John went out on a date with Lynda Jones? Maybe she'll get back at him by going out with Detective Inspector Mavery?

Finally, I am all for seeing that episode, someday, with Molachi the Eternal and Charlie Raven. Maybe in the far, far future you can run a few Molachi stories as back-ups...

Thanks again for more fine work.

Steve Replige

I do have this idea for the Last Story of Molachi the Immortal - having established that he is able to regenerate new limbs in the event of 'accidents', and given that his line of work leads to his getting involved in quite a few 'accidents'...

The final story takes place at the end of the world - everybody and everything else has been destroyed. The only survivor is Molachi the Immortal, or rather all the molachi that have been grown over the years, so you'd have one with a big nose and a little body, one with a big arm, that kind of thing - all fighting it out amongst themselves to determine who is the one TRUE Molachi the Immortal.

I am Molachi the Immortal.

No! I am Molachi the Immortal...

I am... well you get the idea...

I could probably get a six issue prestige series out of that one...

NEXT ISSUE: *Somerset Stunt! The Claw!* Jack Staff and Toot Toot the Robot Man, together again for the first time! All this and Burglar Bill too!



NEXT ISSUE!

ALRIGHT
Y' BUGGER,
YOU'VE HAD
YER BIT A
FUN...

NOW
IT'S TIME
FER ME
T' HAVE
MINE!



JUST WHEN BEN KULMER THOUGHT THINGS COULDN'T GET ANY WORSE...